

**Citizen's Coordinating Council
Pittsfield High School
March 3, 1999
Meeting Highlights**

Prepared by the Massachusetts Office of Dispute Resolution.

Participants

26 members of the CCC were present. There were people 23 in the audience.

Presentation: *Supplemental Investigation Work Plan for the Lower Housatonic River*

Susan Svirsky, Project Director, EPA

Project will include Hydrodynamic Modeling, Peer Review, Human Health Risk Assessment, Ecological Risk Assessment, and Ecological Characterization.

Hydrodynamic Modeling: This will be a collaborative effort between EPA and GE, but EPA will actually do the modeling. Will quantify spatial and temporal trends in PCB's in the water and sediment. Will project endpoints – the time before one can safely consume fish. Will quantify effects of storm events and redistribution of sediments.

Peer Review Process: Applicable to aspects of project beyond river – part of agreement. A panel will be formed. They will be given questions to answer based on investigation. EPA and GE will jointly select contractor that forms panel. Panel nominations are done blindly. Contractor evaluates nominees for potential conflicts of interests. Contractor selects panel members, open to public and agency comment. Actual identities of individual peer reviewers will remain anonymous.

Peer Review Issues: Human health for the first 2 miles, human health for the rest of the river, ecological risk for the rest of the river, and hydrodynamic modeling.

Work Plan Overview – Deb Jones

Provided sampling overview. Also discussed river gauge measurements, and storm flow sampling.

Responses to CCC Questions:

Peer review panel given mandate to determine if EPA followed policies, procedures, etc. relative to particular documents.

Peer review for 1 ½ mile very narrow scope because some things already agreed upon (e.g. cost sharing for 12 years)

Request to have public present to hear discussion that decides upon Selection Contractor and in selection of panel. Choices very limited; only a few contractors in the country to do this type of work.

Peer review not binding – only for agency consideration. EPA to give comments and response on peer review.

Panel does not have to reach consensus; may provide majority and minority opinions.

Bottom feeders including crayfish to be analyzed.

All biological samples (anything that can be consumed by humans) will be analyzed for congenents. Results will indicate if more studies are needed.

For risk assessment purposes, do not have safe/unsafe level of PCB's in blood like we do for lead. Instead, will estimate doses per day based on consumption frequency and quantity. Have lab animal studies relative to "safe does" for non-cancer effects. EPA continues to re-evaluate adequacy of "safe doses" for cancer and non-cancer risk. New studies will be taken into account if peer-reviewed by EPA.

Impact of IEHR Study on assessment ("study stated that PCB's may not cause cancer"). EPA has concerns about how results of study may relate to a superfund site – doesn't account for many things like duration, pregnancy, etc.

OU2 study will be going on at same time as rest of cleanup for facility, etc. Other work not being held up by this study.

Additional investigations will help to determine if unobserved but expected species (such as snakes) are really absent.

Will look at angler-hunter exposure.

Interest in update on Pittsfield Landfill - disposition of barrels. Lynn noted that she is waiting for spring thaw – not started yet – will present when done.

Discussion of need for river site visits via canoe by May 1 (not practical after that date due to black flies).

Human Health Risk Assessment – Jim Walsh

1. Problem formulation/planning – Assessment Endpoints and Conception Model
2. Analyses – Implement plan – evaluate types of exposures and effects. Site-specific toxicity study.
3. Risk Characterization – estimation of risk.
4. Risk Description – evaluation of lines of evidence and degrees of uncertainty.

Document based on agreement to do ecological and human health risk assessments and hydrodynamic modeling as part of Consent Decree for the rest of the river.

Presented group with addendum/errata sheets. Partly due to fact that people who wrote document not part of negotiating team – looking for consistency.

Reaches 1 and 2 included as background for water quality and sediment.

Ecological Characterization - John Lortie

Will provide baseline data to support EPA's risk studies. Will also conduct literature search. Will identify extent of wetlands – maps, aerial photos, and ground investigations. Will conduct wetland function/value assessment for wetland units.

Will estimate species richness and density for reptiles and amphibians

?? Determine breeding habitats

?? Breeding success, metamorphosis success

?? Morphometric data, presence or absence of tumors.

Mammal surveys –specifies diversity (which species using floodplain?)

Forest bird surveys for floodplain and scrub scrub habitat.

Marsh and wading bird surveys – species of management concern.

Rare plant and natural community surveys.

Fresh water mussel studies – current and historic distribution within study area.

Meanders surveys to determine historic and present erosion and accretion areas.

To Do

Organize river site visit via canoe for May 1. Tim and Dennis to organize with assistance from MODR.

Dale (EOEA) offered to provide an update on NRD Enhancement Project at the next meeting

GE and EPA want as much input as possible on Consent Decree before they sign it. Jane suggested that everyone review summary of agreement and determine questions and areas of confusion.

Jane noted that staff people are very busy on the project and that attending subcommittees at this point in time might be difficult. Bryan offered to attend less formal meetings with smaller groups and individuals to share information and get opinions. Anyone interested should contact him.

Next meeting May 12, 1999, Pittsfield High School, 5:30 p.m.; Topic: Consent Decree related issues i.e. first half mile of river, consolidation areas, Allendale School.